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12 September 1958

Copy No. C 59

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



DOCUMENT NO. 1
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☒
DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2010
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE 4-4-80 REVIEWER:

State Dept., JCS reviews completed

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Approved For Release 2002/08/16 : CIA-RDP79T00975A004000010001-5

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25X1

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DAILY BRIEF

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

Watch Committee conclusion -- Taiwan Strait:

The Chinese Communists will continue heavy artillery barrages, interdict supply lines to the offshore islands by using artillery and naval elements as necessary, and maintain a high state of readiness for air operations.

NO
The Chinese Communists now possess a capability to launch major attacks against the Kinmens, the Matsus, and smaller offshore islands with little or no warning. Seizure of one or more of the offshore islands is possible, but amphibious lift necessary for an invasion of Kinmen and Leih Hsu (Little Quemoy) and Matsu has not yet been observed. The Chinese Communists probably do not intend to initiate major offensive military action against Taiwan and the Penghus (Pescadores), but possess a capability for major air attacks against them.

The Chinese Nationalists, fearing US concessions in talks with the Chinese Communists, might undertake

25X1

independent provocative action calculated to embroil the US in hostilities.

NOTE: The Director for Intelligence, Joint Staff, agrees that this is possible, but considers it unlikely in the immediate future.

140
In view of the reported confidence of the Chinese Communist leadership and the increasing belligerence of Chinese Communist propaganda, the Chinese Communists may take military action against US naval or air units operating in the offshore islands area within the recently proclaimed 12-mile territorial limits, although it is difficult to assess the degree of likelihood of this occurring. Such Chinese Communist military action in turn may lead to further US - Chinese Communist armed clashes. Strong Soviet statements of support for the Chinese Communists probably represent a real Soviet commitment to the defense of Communist China. This commitment, however, would probably be honored only in the event that US - Chinese Communist hostilities extend beyond the offshore islands and immediately adjacent mainland areas, and only after a failure of Soviet diplomatic efforts to terminate those hostilities on terms acceptable to the USSR and Communist China.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

NO
*Hammaraskjold mission: Jordan's Prime Minister Rifai considers that UN Secretary General Hammaraskjold's mission to implement the 21 August UNGA resolution on the Middle East has failed, since Nasir has not given acceptable assurance of noninterference in Jordan. Unless Nasir changes his attitude, Hammaraskjold, according to Rifai, plans to make no recommendation to the impending General Assembly session regarding the withdrawal of foreign troops. Nasir is unwilling to accept Jordan's demand that a UN representative

12 Sept 58

DAILY BRIEF

ii

25X1

be stationed in Cairo. On 11 September, commenting on Hammar-skjold's failure to expedite withdrawal, the UAR-controlled clandestine radio in effect called for renewal of anti-Western terrorism. Cairo had earlier warned that unless foreign troops were speedily withdrawn, severe tension would re-appear in the Middle East.

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Jordan: Increased friction has been reported between King Husayn and Prime Minister Rifai, leading to new reports that the King may be induced to appoint a less authoritarian premier. Although agitation has been mounting for relaxation of martial law and other restrictions, Husayn would risk even greater instability in dismissing Rifai unless he decided at the same time to seek some sort of accommodation with Nasir.

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III. SIGNIFICANT INTELLIGENCE REPORTS AND ESTIMATES

(Available during the preceding week)

Special National Intelligence Estimate No. 34-58. Stability of Present Regime in Iran. 26 August 1958.

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National Intelligence Estimate No. 11-5-58. The Economic and Political Consequences of India's Financial Problems. 19 August 1958.

25X1

12 Sept 58

DAILY BRIEF

iii

25X1

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Next 3 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Approved For Release 2002/08/16 : CIA-RDP79T00975A004000010001-5

II. ASIA-AFRICA

Developments in Jordan

Increased friction has developed between King Husayn and Prime Minister Rifai amid new reports that the King may be induced to appoint a less authoritarian premier. Part of Rifai's difficulties with the King appear to reflect the prime minister's efforts to block attempts by his rivals to infiltrate their supporters into key positions from which they might undermine Rifai. Although agitation has been mounting for relaxation of martial law and other restrictions, the King would risk serious instability in dismissing Rifai unless he decided at the same time to seek some sort of accommodation with Nasir.

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A decision by the King to relax internal controls and attempt to cultivate more popular support for the government would run considerable risk in view of the possibility of renewed UAR-supported terrorism in Jordan as a result of the failure of the Hammarskjold mission.

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